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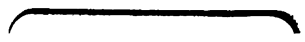
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INTRODUCTION.

SINCE an Analysis is a resolution of any thing into its component principles, the consequent enquiry should be general, the investigation accurate and impartial, and the inference natural. Hence, in every institution, whether sacred or civil, there are general senses affixed to technical phrases, and by defining the terms literally, we may easily misinterpret their true sense and meaning. Episcopacy, in particular, as to its principles, is erroneously described, in consequence of a synthetical mode of reasoning made use of, that concludes rather from a proposition before established, than demonstrative certainty.

*In this respect the present Syllabus appears censurable, by fixing such ideas to terms as they were not intended to convey, and explaining modes altogether contrary to their original design. Whereas in the subsequent remarks, facts only are had recourse to, and the assertions objected to, explained according to their natural import. As there are various equivocal words, admitting of, and including a diversity of senses, consequently, the explication of such is not to be confined to one: as, in this instance, a Church is sometimes understood as a religious assembly, or the edifice where people meet, sometimes for a synod of a Bishops or of Presbyters, at other times for the Pope and a general council. There
being*

being such a number of ambiguous terms, in which our ideas are conveyed, it is much easier to blend, than to distinguish; to embarrass, than elucidate the matter in question. In which case, by considering the relative and qualified senses of the term adopted, we may arrive at its true meaning.

Actuated by generous motives, a concern for truth, and impartial enquiry, we may discover excellencies in that which is deemed odious, and purity in what is called corrupt, by admitting the relative, instead of literal idea that the term conveys. In analytical disquisitions, perfect uniformity becomes requisite, to evince the existence of the whole, by the symmetry of its parts. Episcopacy thus viewed, includes more than we can abstractedly conceive; for, by considering it national, we must suppose it constitutional; and if constitutional, consequently legal, and if legal, free, because it is constitutional. What in one part may appear indefensible, when together is otherwise. What ecclesiastical, may seem oppressive; as civil, proves itself constitutionally liberal. Connect the cause and the effect, the Constitution and Episcopacy itself, the consequence cannot well be despotic, while the cause is intrinsically free.

REMARKS, &c.

CHRISTIANITY, abstracted from every schismatic or party attachment, name or denomination, is benevolent in its nature, and beneficent in its effects. Neither the iron sceptre of despotism, nor the malevolent designs of men, can influence its unsullied purity, to diffuse any thing but good. The blessings of society, in their fullest extent, are necessarily consequent on Christianity, which provides for the comfort and happiness of mankind. But, as the moral depravation of man forbids a reciprocation of interests, to be supported by no other means, than the will, restraint became requisite for the common preservation of the whole. Hence, so inseparable a connection exists between *civil* and *religious* Liberty, that the same authority which requires us to render unto God, the things that are God's, also commands us, to render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's. If the political existence of a state depends on constitutional laws, may

may we not, with equal justice, suppose that a *scriptural* limitation tends to *establish* the general system of Christianity itself. Were declamation unbounded, error would appear in the garb of truth, and truth itself be exploded as the extreme of falsehood; and the deluded multitude might (even more than they are already) “be carried about with diverse “winds of doctrine.”

IN the common structure of an edifice, much less in matters of a more refined nature, an intelligent person would not be supposed to act without a plan, and that plan must be *established* for the general government of the whole. There cannot be any *true* system of Christianity, but what is founded on Revelation; nor can it be proved perfectly defensible, any further than it is consistent with that rule of faith and practice. A *Church*, whose Liturgy is in part a transcript of Scripture, and whose Articles are derived from that sacred source of knowledge, for the union of civil and religious liberty in one indissoluble bond, has been established as the *National Church of England*, merely as a titular distinction from antichristian professors. This national establishment, as a proof of its moderation and candour, has tolerated almost every description of persons, that dissent, or differ from it; and, as a *return* for so generous a procedure, the Rev. Mr. *Robinson* has proposed a plan of Lectures, on the principles

principles of non-conformity, for the instruction of Catechumens, — not in meekness, gentleness and forbearance, — but in virulence, enmity and opposition to a Church, that constitutionally and executive protects them, by its conjunction with the civil law, from molestation or insult. That such are the requitals of beneficence will appear, by considering his plan of Lectures, as they severally hold forth accusation, ridicule and contempt, in a stile so *temperate*, as to abound with almost every invective, but a papal anathema.

THE first Lecture (according to Mr. Robinson's plan) consists "of the doctrine of *free*, religious enquiry *stated, explained, and vindicated.*" As it is *stated* by the ingenious author, it appears so extremely *extensive*, as, scarcely, to admit of national, or congregated union with *any* set of men. As he defines it, "*uncontrouled by human Authority*;" whereas, the admission of a member to a dissenting communion depends on a confession of faith, either verbal or written, *approved* by that community in general, who are the ostensible authority, and as *Men*, consequently *human*. Though I grant they admit them on, what they suppose, *scriptural* evidence; yet, if a person imbibes notions generally exploded by them, he is by *their Authority*, refused admittance: whence an *Enquirer* of this description, under no human controul, must remain *without* the

the pale of *their Church for ever*. I appeal then to the impartial reader, if the Enquiry *stated*, does not defeat its own purpose.

THE second thing to be attended to is the *Explanation*, which is briefly this, that "enquiry is *free*" "when it possesses a liberty of proceeding as far" "as the reason and fitness of things allow." In this case who is the Umpire? The *reasonableness* of a thing is in *common* determined by the *Opinion* people have of that thing. In the dissenting Church-government, who determines there? The Church. Where then is *this* boasted *Freedom* of enquiry, if every member be not at liberty to think, reason, or maintain what he pleases? One sentiment admits. Another excludes. If a man is an *Arian* in an *orthodox* society, will he not complain of the want of *free* religious enquiry, if he is excluded merely for being an *Arian*? It is true, Revelation is the only limit; but, when they have done all, it is *their construction* of Revelation *limits*, as it necessarily must.

THIS *Explanation*, once admitted, destroys every purpose of the Separatists, who admit *none without* certain restrictions, both in principle and practice. It would certainly perplex, even Mr. *Robinson* himself, to unite in *one* idea, *Restriction* of principles and *free* religious enquiry.

I PROCEED now to the *Vindication*. The right of private judgment few Protestants deny; but to vindicate an *uncontrouled* enquiry, is to condemn prescribed rules of admission, and in words to *dissent* from Non-conformity itself, unless is meant — *Non-conformity to any thing*.

THE *Illustration* is historically feasible, but conclusively indefensible. After self-applauses in abundance, we are informed that *human* Establishments depress, what *free* joining a church cultivates, even *free Enquiry*. The act of joining a church may be free, the act of joining the Church of *England* is free also, (the Baptism of Infants being considered more as dedicatory than otherwise) no compulsion, that we hear of, either civil or ecclesiastical. But so far from depressing *free* enquiry are the rituals of the Church, that we find, in the *twentieth* Article, “The Church hath power to decree rights or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of Faith; and yet, its not lawful for the Church to ordain any thing contrary to God’s Word written; neither may it so expound any place of Scripture, so that it may be repugnant to another.” These decrees do not amount to more than a due provision against error, which design the Dissenters profess to have in view, by their confessions of faith at admission. I know not then, how it can be proved that the Church of *England*, by her restrictions,
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in anywise depresses *free Enquiry*, when men of various sentiments are admitted to her communion, without even an assent to the Articles being demanded; (the case of her Clergy excepted) and, at the same time, the Non-conformists, those FREE-AGENTS, refuse admittance to *any*, but such, whose principles or confession they have previously *approved* !

Mr. *Robinson's Illustration* serves only to *illustrate* this, that the Church of *England*, without *professing* herself so, is *really free* ; and the Nonconformists, by the act of *dissenting*, confirm it as a *Truth* : but themselves *deny free* Admission to ALL, though such contenders for religious *Freedom*. Thus is Mr. *Robinson's* first Lecture *litterally stated, explained, and illustrated*. The *Vindication*, I leave to those who are *able* to effect it.

The second, third, and fourth Lectures being merely historical, it is unnecessary to observe further on them than, that in narrative, you generally distinguish the peculiar prejudice of the narrator, who paints some beautiful, others deformed; some right, and others wrong; just as his fancy dictates.

In the fifth Lecture we are informed, " A religious society, formed on principles of Revelation

“lation, has no other rule of action, than the
 “express word of God.” Granted. The objec-
 tion made in consequence hereof is, “That Re-
 “velation gives Christ an exclusive right of le-
 “gislation,” and says Mr. *Robinson*, “The episcopal
 “Church transferred all these rights to Harry and
 “Elizabeth.” That the King, for the time being,
 is considered as Head of the Church, in no other
 sense than ceremonially, in connection with his
 royal prerogative, as a national governor, is evi-
 dent from the 37th article, which sufficiently re-
 futes that objection, and (to use Mr. *Robinson*’s
 own words) “As a Religious Society, formed on
 “principles of Revelation, has no other rule of
 “action than the express word of God,” I should
 be glad to know, how Mr. *Robinson* will evade
 St. Peter’s exhortation, “Submit yourselves to
 “every ordinance of man, for the Lord’s sake,
 “whether it be to the *King* as *supreme*, or unto
 “governors, as unto them that are sent by him
 “for the punishment of evil doers, and for the
 “praise of them that do well.” Mr. *Robinson* will
 find some difficulty to determine, or rather to
limit, the sense in which the King is to be submit-
 ted to, as supreme.

The Apostle also commands submission to every
 ordinance of man, for the Lord’s sake, and where
 he will *confine* a term so *extensive*, I know not.

That

That the King's supremacy is not intended, as *any* infringement on the spiritual and kingly authority of Christ, over the Church, appears plainly from the constitution of the Church itself; which is founded on those principles that assert the offices of Christ, both as a Priest, a Prophet, and a King.

The officers of this Church (says the ingenious Lecturer) are *all* unknown to Scripture, not recollecting that Bishops in particular are signified as a part of the Gospel Church.

This *mild* accuser further asserts, that; "The Liturgy is a defective book in every point of view; its authority *entirely human*." To refute this objection needs very little skill. A moment's view of the Liturgy will soon convince the most disaffected reader, that its authority is *not entirely human*, being principally composed of extracts from the sacred Scriptures, which, on a moderate calculation, constitutes one *third* of it, the prayers being the chief part that is of human composition: so that Mr. *Robinson* must excuse my rudeness, if I declare his assertion false.

I am almost at a loss, which to admire most, the commencement or conclusion of the Lectures; they begin rather coolly, but finish, (Tremble,

O, Church-

O Churchmen, at the thought!) *vehemently* indeed.

The fifth Lecture concludes, by *accounting* for the quiet acquiescence of the bulk of the people in this kind of worship, by such a train of causes, as leads one to suppose the Dissenting Interest are guided by some, or one of them, in order to judge so *accurately* on the occasion.

The sixth Lecture, though historical, begins with a capital charge, or accusation, that tends to criminate us *decluded* Churchmen, collectively and individually, with a daring enormity: "One capital artifice," says our author, "of high Churchmen is, to impute their own vices to others, and to impute other people's excellencies to themselves."

Since superstition and error thus pervade the Prelatical Hierarchy, it is not much to be wondered at, if we impute our vices to others, and ascribe the *professed* excellencies even of Non-conformity to ourselves; for, Mr. *Robinson* must be convinced from *experience*, there is nothing scarcely which Superstition will not effect; for it will even make men believe black to be white, or the azure sky to be in common brown. It will even make a man contend for what he

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refuses.

refuses to give, or confine Liberty of Conscience to the belief of one set of truths. That Superstition effects these things we have more than one instance to prove.

The ingenious author is rather deceived, I imagine, when he says, that Churchmen are for claiming the excellencies of other communions; whereas, I am inclined to believe, they scarce see any excellency in them.

To exemplify the *candour* of this ingenious writer, I beg leave to revert to a foregoing Lecture, where he *finishes*, by *plating* Prelates and people before the Judge of the whole Earth, at the last day; and, after much perverted detail, concludes the dreadful sentence—DEPART. If this is not equal to any papal anathema itself, what is? How dare any man, or set of men extend their contracted ideas to a scene so awful in itself, and specifically doom *any* to that dread dismissal? Is this a specimen of *Non-conformity*? *Are they* to condemn us in this life, and to judge us in the next? Who has delegated such powers to Mr. Robinson, that *he* can predetermine the final state of men. Let this suffice, in a degree, as a general sample of the rest.

According to Mr. Robinson's *conclusive* mode of reasoning, neither *free* enquiry, nor scarcely *free* existence

existence are allowed; for, those who cannot confine their censures by the boundaries of the present, are daring, to a degree, to extend them to never-ending futurity.

Appeal to the voice of reason, yea rather consult Revelation itself, and we are told, "Judge not, lest ye be also judged." If such principles are held forth to view in a Syllabus, or Plan of Lectures, what are we to infer from thence? That persecution is not confined to one description of persons.

Mr. *Robinson* speaks much of the persecution of the Puritans, in Charles and James's reigns; but he will do well to remember, that during Cromwell's protectorship, the Presbyterians were for engrossing the *whole* power to themselves, *establishing* Presbytery, and tolerating *none* other whatever. Contrast this with Mr. *Robinson's* description of Non-conformity, and it will be found fallacious and delusive.

The seventh Lecture, relative to the terms of episcopal communion, is introduced with a general censure on the Liturgy, as before; but, in particular, for its being called a *divine* service, which results from its being founded on, and inculcating the *divine* authority of the Scriptures.

The eighth, ninth, and tenth Lectures, being so many partial descriptions of former times, as best suited to the author's purpose, I mean to confine my remarks to such assertions, as are more abstracted from historical detail; and therefore proceed to the eleventh Lecture, where we are presented with a view of *modern Non-conformity*.

We are informed, in the first place, there are stronger arguments for Non-conformity *now* than *ever*, which it seems are deduced from their *number, learning, political sentiments, property, and Church Polity*—Arguments these that might, with equal weight, be made use of for many other sentiments, but no social or political argument can possibly exceed St. Peter's exhortation: "Finally, "be ye all of one mind, having compassion one "of another; love as brethren; be pitiful, be "courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrarywise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should "inherit a blessing."

Under the head of *Church Polity*, Mr. *Robinson* has endeavoured to prove *modern Non-conformity* the *wisest* in the world, for six reasons, by which he excludes every other set of persons from an *equal* share of wisdom, either in mode or discipline; and concludes

concludes by saying, The Non-conformists are, with all their infirmities, the Excellent of the Earth, in whom is all our delight. *Vanitas vanitatis, omnia vanitas!*

I proceed now briefly to consider the arguments for *modern Non-conformity*; and the first we meet with is *number*. It has been justly remarked, that to judge of the *truth* of any sentiment, or party, by the multitude of its profelytes, is to be deceived by an outward appearance; for popularity, so far from being a proof of the *goodness* of a cause, is often the contrary, as we find instanced in the Papists, who are extremely numerous. But our author says, “Where enquiry is *free*, and men actually examine, *numbers* are considerable.” In answer to this, it is as easy to draw this inference, even in that case, as otherwise; namely, That it suits their interest or inclination, and therefore so many adhere to it. *Truth*, as self-existent, does *not* depend for its *Being* on the *numbers* who believe or embrace it; but *error* often does; and derives its sanction from that source only, even *Vox Populi*.

This argument then, instead of *recommending*, with the more discerning, would *discommmend* Non-conformity: “Be not conformed to the fashions,

“ or

"(or general notions as well as practice) of this "world," Mr. *Robinson's* purpose is in this respect defeated.

Learning is the second argument made use of: "The modern Dissenters," says the ingenious author, "possess men of eminent literature in every "branch of science."—Learning is by no means essential to truth itself, nor yet to virtue. It is justly deemed ornamental, embellishing, but no more. As to their *superiority (if equality)* to Conformists, in this respect, is utterly inadmissible, as instances will prove.

The third argument is, their "Political Sentiments." "Modern Non-conformity," (says Mr. *Robinson*) "naturally leads us to study government."——Inconsistency is a certain evidence of falsehood.—In the former Lectures, Mr. *Robinson* sets forth the *excellency* of Non-conformity as *wholly* divested of any consideration of, or connection with civil jurisdiction, penal laws, and legislative powers.—Now, the political sentiments of the Non-conformists are used as an argument in *their* favour. I should be glad to know, whether Mr. *Robinson* means to instance America, as a proof of the total unconnectedness of *Non-conformity* with civil government, or of the *moderation* of their po-
litical

litical sentiments? To return to the present purpose; we see, these are the people that, in one Lecture, are to be represented not concerning themselves with the *polity* and government of the nation, and, in another, their *study of government* is to be pleaded in *their behalf*. One while they are *detached* from *secular concerns*; another, making them their *study*. What an heterogeneous compound! What a discordant jargon must the principles of *Non-conformity* be, if in *one* instance they are *regardless* of civil concerns; in another, *studiously* contemplating them; for the pursuit or *exercise* of it (we may observe, by the bye) is *only* for *want of power*.

Before I conclude on this head, I must beg leave to appeal to the impartial reader, whether any thing can be *more* ridiculous, than *endeavouring to unite in one idea two* opposite ones; or, in other words, to reconcile the being *wholly* detached from *civil jurisdiction*, and the *study of government*.

“The *property* of the Dissenters,” says Mr. Robinson, is very considerable.” A *most powerful* argument this! The same may be made use of in defence of Popery: the Romish Church, consisting of men of great opulence in the State; therefore, by parity of reasoning, *excellent*. Even the despised
Church

worship. *Until Mr. Robinson can vindicate such capital omissions, he need not even attempt to defend Non-conformity, since it is evident they do not conform in this respect to the commands of Heaven, any more than the commands of men. On the other hand, the Church of England not only professes a veneration for the Scriptures; but the greater part of her mode of worship consists in the reading them.*

Episcopacy then, both in mode, as well as principles, may defy contenders, and defeat them with their own weapons, seeing those profess'd enemies to forms are formal themselves; and such who would not wear a surplice or a gown, can admit a band without defiling their consciences—To evince the intrinsic purity of one, and the traditional impurity of the other, I must leave them to determine.

Since the genuine dictates of true religion inculcate an universal philanthropy, I can readily agree with Mr. Robinson, in one of his quotations from St. Paul, which seems applicable to him, and which in punctually observing, may preserve him, and his cause from the danger of self-refutation; namely, "Study to be quiet."—A study much to be commended in a day, when unanimity is to be earnestly wished for, and divisions greatly to be dreaded.

F I N I S.